

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 074866  
ORIGIN SS-15

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 074866

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 1598 ACTION SECSTATE TEL AVIV USUN  
INFO AMMAN CAIRO JIDDA KUWAIT BAGHDAD 22 MAR 78

QUOTE

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1598

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR MOPS MARR SY LE IZ

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: MOVEMENT OF IRAQI TRUCK CONVOYS

REF: A) DAMASCUS 1578 B) STATE 71173 C) STATE 72516

SUMMARY: KHADDAM DOWNPLAYS PRACTICAL IMPORT OF IRAQI CONVOYS  
AND SAYS SYRIA IS COMMITTED TO FACILITATING DELIVERY OF HELP TO  
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PALESTINIANS. SYRIA CONGRATULATES USG FOR ITS WORK ON BEHALF  
OF SC RES 425 AND PLEDGES FULL SYRIAN SUPPORT AGAINST ANY  
ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE LEBANESE STABILITY AFTER REPEAT AFTER ISRAEL  
IMPLEMENTS WITHDRAWAL AND UN FORCES ARE IN PLACE. ASSAD'S TRIP  
TO INDIA IS POSTPONED. WILL SEE KHADDAM AGAIN AS SOON AS  
SIILASVUO HAS BROACHED CONCEPT OF ADF MOVE TO LITANI. END SUMMARY

1. KHADDAM CALLED ME IN EVENING MARCH 21. AFTER EXPRESSING REGRET HE HAD BEEN UNABLE TO SEE ME EARLIER, HE OBSERVED THAT ISRAELI INVASION OF SOUTH LEBANON HAD LEFT ARAB WORLD PUZZLED AND GREATLY ANGERED. THE ADF, "BEING UNDER ORDERS OF SARKIS AND OPERATING AS LEBANESE FORCE," HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN FIGHTING. HOWEVER, NEITHER SYRIA NOR ANY OTHER ARAB COUNTRY COULD REMAIN INACTIVE IN FACE OF ISRAELI ATTACK ON ANOTHER ARAB STATE. REFERRING TO ASSAD'S MARCH 18 SPEECH AT THE EUPHRATES DAM CEREMONIES, KHADDAM DESCRIBED IT AS "ONLY NATURAL FOR SYRIA TO FACILITATE THE DELIVERY OF ANY HELP IT CAN TO THE PALESTINIANS."

2. RE UN DEVELOPMENTS, HE SAID THAT DAMASCUS CONSIDERED RAPID IMPLEMENTATION OF RES 425, UNCONDITIONAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RAPID ENTRY OF UN FORCES TO THE SOUTH TO HELP THE GOL EXTEND ITS CONTROL TO THE BORDER AS THE MAJOR ELEMENTS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE PEACE IN THE REGION. SC RESOLUTION MUST BE QUICKLY IMPLEMENTED, OTHERWISE CONDITIONS WILL RAPIDLY DETERIORATE.

3. FONMIN EXTENDED SYRIA'S SPECIAL THANKS TO USG FOR AMERICAN ATTITUDE IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL LAST WEEK-END AND ITS SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF RESOLUTION 425. SYRIA WAS "GREATLY SATISFIED" WITH THE RESULTS AND HE ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS PERSONAL  
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APPRECIATION TO THE SECRETARY.

4. TURNING TO ISSUE OF IRAQI CONVOYS, KHADDAM SAID HE HAD STUDIED OUR MESSAGE (REF B). HE CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS ACTIVITY SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BE EXAGGERATED. "A FEW HUNDRED VOLUNTEERS" HAD ARRIVED IN THE CONVOYS; THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THESE WERE PALESTINIANS RESIDENT IN IRAQ. REFERRING TO MY CONVERSATION A FEW HOURS EARLIER WITH DEPFONMIN QADDUR (REF A), KHADDAM NOTED THAT SYRIA SHARED OUR CONCERN ABOUT DANGERS IN THE INTERIM PERIOD PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF UN FORCES. TO MINIMIZE SUCH DANGERS, US MUST USE ITS INFLUENCE TO SECURE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION. I ASSURED HIM WE WERE WORKING TO SECURE FULL AND RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE AREA BUT AS REGARDS INTIMATELY RELATED QUESTION OF NO ONE COULD PREDICT HOW MANY WEEKS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO GET NEW UN FORCE FULLY OPERATIONAL. IN MEANTIME, DANGERS WERE HIGH AND ANY INCIDENTS WHICH PALESTINIAN ELEMENTS MIGHT CAUSE RISKED DESTROYING CEASEFIRE. KHADDAM REPLIED THAT SYRIA OFFICIALLY SUPPORTS SC RESOLUTION 425 AND WILL EXERT EVERY EFFORT TO ASSURE ITS IMPLEMENTATION. HE HAD JUST GIVEN THIS SAME ASSURANCE TO LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER HOSS.

5. I ASKED WHAT ATTITUDE HOSS HAD EXPRESSED TOWARD ARRIVAL OF IRAQI FORCES AND OF ANY OTHER ARAB FORCES NOT OPERATING UNDER ADF CONTROL. KHADDAM RESPONDED THAT USE OF WORD "FORCES" WAS MISLEADING. NO ORGANIZED UNITS HAD ARRIVED FROM IRAQ. SARG AND GOL AGREED THAT ANY ORGANIZED FORCE ENTERING THE COUNTRY MUST HAVE THE APPROVAL OF THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES. HE ADDED THAT THE MAJOR PART OF THE CARGO CARRIED BY THE IRAQI CONVOY HAD BEEN MEDICAL AND RELIEF SUPPLIES. I REPLIED THAT WE MUST NOT PLAY WITH LABELS; IN MANY CASES, WHAT HAD TORN LEBANON APART IN THE CIVIL WAR WAS THE WORK OF LOOSELY ORGANIZED MILITIA AND EVEN INDIVIDUALLY INITIATED ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

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6. I TRIED TO GET HIM TO SAY THAT SYRIA WOULD BLOCK FUTURE CONVOYS. HIS MOST SPECIFIC REPLY WAS THAT ONCE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WAS COMPLETED "ALL VOLUNTEERS" WOULD WITHDRAW AND SYRIA WOULD ACT TO PREVENT ANY PARTY FROM TRYING TO SABOTAGE LEBANESE STABILITY. I REPLIED THAT SYRIAN LEADERSHIP MUST DRAW UP A BALANCE SHEET AND JUDGE WHETHER ALLOWING "A FEW HUNDRED VOLUNTEERS", AS HE HAD DESCRIBED THEM, TO JOIN THE PALESTINIANS ALREADY IN LEBANON WAS WORTH THE RISK IT CONSTITUTED OF REIGNITING THE FIGHTING. WE CONSIDERED THIS A HIGH RISK. HE REPEATED THAT SYRIA WILL WORK "IMMEDIATELY ON IMPLEMENTATION OF SC RESOLUTION" TO END ALL PROVOCATIONS WHICH WOULD THREATEN AN EXPLOSION IN LEBANON.

7. COMMENT: THE SYRIANS WANT TO BOTH HAVE THEIR CAKE AND EAT IT. THEY WANT CEASEFIRE TO LAST AND RES 425 TO BE IMPLEMENTED BUT ALSO WANT TO KEEP THE IRAQIS, EGYPTIANS, AND POSSIBLY LIBYANS AS WELL, FROM SCORING PROPAGANDA SUCCESSES AGAINST SYRIA. THEY SEEM TO HAVE DECIDED SUCH ATTACKS WOULD BE DAMAGING WERE DAMASCUS TO REFUSE TO ALLOW TRANSIT OF THE CONVOYS. KHADDAM WAS ENGAGING IN OBVIOUS DECEPTION IN LABELING IRAQI FORCES AS VOLUNTEERS (OTHER SOURCES APPEAR TO CONFIRM ALF UNITS WERE INVOLVED), BUT THIS DISTINCTION MAY BE HELPFUL TO SYRIA IN TAKING TOUGHER LINE IN FUTURE. IF THEY DO INTERDICT FUTURE TRANSITS, THEY WILL PROBABLY DO SO WITHOUT ANNOUNCING SUCH A DECISION AND WITHOUT INFORMING US. I ASSUMED HOSS MADE LEBANESE CASE AGAINST THE CONVOYS AND WILL BE ADVISING EMBASSY BEIRUT HOW HE THINKS THE SYRIANS WILL ACT. KHADDAM'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONVOYS STRONGLY SUGGESTS. SYRIANS ARE NOT YET READY TO SUPPRESS FEDAYEEN FORCES.

8. THIS MEETING TOOK PLACE PRIOR TO RECEIPT STATE 72516.

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BECAUSE OF LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS, ASSAD HAS POSTPONED  
HIS VISIT TO INDIA SCHEDULED TO START MARCH 22. I WILL  
HIT KHADDAM AGAIN AS SOON AS SIILASVUO HAS SEEN HIM RE  
CONCEPT OF ADF MOVE TO LITANI. PREDICT ASSAD WILL WANT  
EXPLICIT, IDEALLY PUBLIC, REQUEST FROM BOTH SARKIS  
AND UN BEFORE HE AGREES TO THAT MOVE WHICH WILL HAVE HIGHLY  
SENSITIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR SYRIAN-PLO RELATIONSHIP.  
PUBLIC ISRAELI SILENCE ABOUT ITS EXPECTATIONS OF SYRIA'S  
POLICEMAN ROLE WILL ALSO BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE FOR SAME REASONS.  
MURPHY  
UNQUOTE VANCE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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